

**RULES, ENACTMENTS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
Held via Audio Webinar Pursuant to Temporary Emergency Orders**

**Members: Chairman Sullivan and Legislators Albano & Castellano**

**Thursday**

**6:00pm**

**November 19, 2020**

The meeting was called to order via audio webinar at 6:03pm by Chairman Sullivan who lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Committee Members Albano, Castellano, & Chairman Sullivan were present.

**Item #3 – Approval of Minutes – September 10, 2020 Committee Meeting & October 13, 2020 Budget Meeting**

The minutes were approved as submitted.

**Item #4 – Approval/ Appointment/ Veteran Indigent Burial Designee/ Putnam County Veterans Affairs Director**

Chairman Sullivan stated he is thankful that Director of Veterans Affairs Karl Rohde has volunteered for this honorable position.

Legislator Castellano stated there is no better person in Putnam County than Director Rohde to hold this position.

Chairman Sullivan made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

**Item #5 – Approval/ Formation of and Appointments to the Charter Review Commission**

Chairman Sullivan stated every 10 years a review of the Putnam County Charter is required. He stated the resolution before the Committee tonight appoints the initial members of the Charter Review Commission, who are the Chair of the Putnam County Legislature, Chair of the Rules, Enactments, & Intergovernmental Relations Committee, Legislative Counsel and the County Attorney. He stated as the Charter Review Commission moves forward with the review, he encouraged fellow Legislators and members of the public to submit comments or suggestions in writing for consideration. He stated given the current environment with restrictions in place due to COVID-19, he believes this is the safest way to accommodate suggestions. He stated once the Charter Review Commission has completed their review, all recommended changes will be submitted to the Legislature for final approval.

Legislator Montgomery stated at last month's Rules Committee Meeting when this was discussed, Chairman Sullivan referred to the process as "housekeeping" and mentioned

no major changes were expected. She questioned if Chairman Sullivan had an idea of what changes came out of the 2000-2001 and 2010-2011 Charter Reviews.

Chairman Sullivan stated he has reviewed some of the prior changes.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if Chairman Sullivan has any modifications in mind at this stage or if recommendations have been made by the County Executive.

Chairman Sullivan stated he does not have any changes in mind at the moment. He stated the County Executive has not made any recommendations at this point. He stated the four (4) members of the Charter Review Commission will go through the Charter line by line if necessary. He stated he is aware of a few updates that are needed but does not expect any major changes.

Legislator Montgomery stated she would assume there are goals and objectives of the review that the Charter Review Commission will follow. She stated Chairman Sullivan has referred to the Trombetta Rule in regard to the goals, objectives, and priorities. She questioned how this relates at this point as goals have not yet been set. She stated she believes there should be representation from the minority member of the Legislature on the Charter Review Commission and she made her interest of being on the Commission known in a letter which went unanswered. She stated at the September Rules Committee Meeting Chairman Sullivan stated that past Charter Review Commissions have also included citizens familiar with the Charter and operations of County Government and that the Rules Committee would review resumes and conduct interviews of perspective members of the public. She questioned if this is still on the table since the statement was made that written comments would be accepted from the public.

Chairman Sullivan stated due to the extenuating circumstances stemming from COVID-19 he believes it would be more efficient to have the Charter Review Commission designed as presented and comments or suggestions from the public will be welcomed. He stated the Legislature will need to approve any changes recommended by the Charter Review Commission. He thanked Legislator Montgomery for her comments.

Legislator Addonizio stated a notable change that came from a past Charter Review was the establishment of term limits for Legislators. She stated throughout the process there will be opportunity for the public to submit comments and suggestions to the Charter Review Commission.

Legislator Nacerino agreed with Legislator Addonizio; there will be ample time for public input via written comment. She stated the purpose of this review is to determine what is still applicable and what may no longer be applicable. She stated equal opportunity is given to all Legislators or members of the public who would like to participate in this process.

Chairman Sullivan stated that is correct.

Legislator Sayegh clarified that all Legislators will have the opportunity to submit their suggestions of possible changes for consideration by the Charter Review Commission.

Chairman Sullivan stated yes, that is correct. He stated when Charter Review Commission Meetings are scheduled, they will be open to other Legislators and members of the public who would like to attend, while following COVID-19 guidelines.

Legislator Sayegh questioned if there is a timeline that the Commission will follow.

Chairman Sullivan stated there is no timeline detailed in the Charter, however he predicts it will take about 12-18 months.

Legislator Montgomery stated a lot of necessary tasks are being accomplished digitally, for example the Legislative Meetings, therefore she believes the meetings could be held and participation could be allowed virtually. She stated she believes there should be representation from the minority member of the Legislature and she requested to be on the Charter Review Commission. She stated the Charter is a very important document. She stated it seems there is an effort to limit the participation of towns and villages, rather than having them appoint representatives to the Charter Review Commission as has been past practice. She stated instead, they will be asked to review the Charter on their own and submit written comments on suggested changes. She questioned where the leadership is in making this road map for the County available to all stakeholders. She stated this format prevents the towns and villages from accessing the full discussion of changes and being able to contextualize them in a group setting with leadership and it prevents the towns and villages from addressing Charter issues that might affect them. She stated towns and villages are being isolated rather than included. She encouraged her colleagues, especially those on the Rules Committee not to move this resolution forward as is and to table it until goals, priorities, and a timeline have been set for this Charter Review. She stated this is a very important, difficult task that should not just be handled by a select few; it should be inclusive to all towns.

Legislator Albano stated this is the beginning of the process that will go on for months with opportunity for input. He stated all submitted information is going to be explored.

Chairman Sullivan stated the Charter Review is going to be done the best way it can be under the Governor's current guidelines. He stated nothing is being done to exclude anyone.

Legislator Nacerino stated she does not believe previous minority members of the Legislature have been on boards solely based on the fact that they were in the minority. She stated towns working with their own master plan are familiar with the logistics of the planning and how it coordinates with the County. She stated she believes the towns will be readily available to provide feedback. She stated this process will take many months

and it is unknown what the circumstances relating to COVID will be as we move forward.

Legislator Montgomery requested to make a comment.

Chairman Sullivan stated Legislator Montgomery has been allowed ample time to speak about this subject.

Chairman Sullivan made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

### **Item #6 – Approval/ Contract/ Legislative Counsel**

Legislator Jonke stated his support of this contract. He stated the Legislature has been served very well by Legislative Counsel Firriolo and he thanked him for his work.

Legislator Nacerino echoed Legislator Jonke's sentiments.

Legislator Albano stated the Legislature has received tremendous support from Legislative Counsel Firriolo.

Legislator Addonizio agreed with her colleagues.

Legislator Montgomery stated this contract is not included in the backup material on the agenda.

Legislator Albano stated this is a renewal of a current contract.

Legislator Montgomery stated she would like to see the contract before making comments, which may be done at the Full Legislative Meeting.

Legislator Sayegh stated she believes the Legislature has been represented well by Legislative Counsel Firriolo and she wholeheartedly agrees with the resolution before the Committee to renew this contract.

Legislator Castellano stated the Legislature has outstanding legal representation and there has been a savings to the taxpayers of Putnam County since the change in counsel has been made.

Legislator Addonizio clarified that this not a new contract, it is a three (3) year contract that is renewed annually.

Chairman Sullivan thanked Legislator Addonizio for that clarification. He stated a copy of the contract is available in the Legislative Office.

Legislator Montgomery stated a contract is being approved that is not in front of the Committee.

Legislator Albano clarified that the same contract was approved last year as well.

Legislator Montgomery requested a copy of the contract.

Chairman Sullivan made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

**Item #7 – Approval/ Reappointments/ Home Improvement Board/ Donovan, Domin, Porcelli, & Morrison**

Chairman Sullivan thanked the Home Improvement Board Members for their service and the work they do on the Board. He also thanked the Consumer Affairs Department for their work as well.

Chairman Sullivan made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

**Item #8 – Approval/ Authorization for the Commencement of Litigation – Liberty Mutual Insurance Company**

At 6:38 Legislator Albano made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss litigation; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

At 7:21 Chairman Sullivan made a motion to come out of Executive Session; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

No action was taken.

Chairman Sullivan made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

**Item #9 – Other Business – None**

**Item #10 – Adjournment**

There being no further business at 7:22pm, Chairman Sullivan made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Beth Robinson.